United Nations A/ES-10/716–S/2016/270

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
23 March 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 22 March 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you that the situation in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, continues to deteriorate as Israel, the occupying Power, continues with its illegal and provocative practices, which include its settlement colonization enterprise, which brings with it the element of a racist, radical and violent settler population, numbering 650,000, that has been illegally transferred to the occupied territory by the occupying Power and that continues to attack Palestinian civilians with barbarity and with the military protection of Israeli occupying forces.

The occupying Power also persists with complete impunity with all of its other policies and measures that are in violation of international law. This includes the killing and injuring of innocent Palestinian civilians, among them women and children, as well as collective punishment measures against the entire Palestinian population living under Israel's military occupation. Such illegal policies and measures are exacerbating the volatile situation on the ground and heightening tensions between the two sides, with dangerous ramifications.

Firstly, I must draw attention to the heinous crime committed on 20 March 2016 by Israeli settler terrorists in the village of Duma in the West Bank, where Israeli arsonists set ablaze the home of a cousin and a key Palestinian witness scheduled to testify against settlers charged with firebombing the home of his relatives in Duma last summer. It is to be recalled that, in July 2015, Israeli terrorist settlers threw firebombs into the home of the Dwabasheh family, burning alive an 18-month-old baby, Ali, as he slept in his bed and severely burning his mother and father, Reham and Sa'ad, who later died from their wounds, and leaving their son, Ahmed, only 4 years old, severely injured with burns all over his body and orphaned. In the attack on Ibrahim Dawabsheh's home this Sunday, every room in

Please recycle

the home was charred with black smoke and the bedroom significantly damaged, and Ibrahim and his wife had to be taken to hospital for smoke inhalation.

As Israeli settlers continue their rampages, terrorizing and traumatizing Palestinian families, we call again for immediate measures to hold accountable all settlers committing crimes against the Palestinian people. Impunity for Israeli settlers cannot continue to be the norm, and the international community must demand that Israel uphold its obligations to investigate all such crimes and hold the perpetrators accountable. Terrorism in all its forms must be unequivocally condemned and cease.

The presence of these extremist settlers on our land is the direct result of Israel's illegal settlement colonization all throughout the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, an illegal campaign that Israel, the occupying Power, persists with in grave breach of its legal obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Palestinian property continues to be confiscated and destroyed, and settlements continue to be expanded by the occupying Power at an accelerated pace, changing the landscape every single day, both geographically and demographically, as Palestinian civilians continue to be forcibly displaced in high numbers.

Israel carries on with this illegal project in flagrant defiance of world opinion and contempt for international law, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which classifies settlement building as a war crime. Without a doubt, the lack of accountability has fostered this Israeli impunity. It is long overdue for the international community, particularly the Security Council, to confront Israel's illegal settlement building as a matter of legal, political and moral responsibility, with full knowledge that such illegal actions have obstructed and continue to obstruct the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the conflict and are destroying any possibility of a two-State solution.

It is in this regard that the Palestinian leadership condemns yesterday's decision by the Israeli Government to take over 1,200 dunums of Palestinian-owned land outside the villages of Sawiya, Lubban al-Sharqia and Qaryout, south of Nablus, and declare it as "State property". The land to be confiscated is close to the so-called settlements of "Eli" and "Shilo", two illegal Israeli settlements located along the Nablus-Ramallah highway.

This decision came on the heels of the Israeli announcement on 15 March 2016 regarding the seizure of large tracts of land in the occupied West Bank near the Dead Sea and the Palestinian city of Jericho. The occupying Power brazenly declared 579 acres, shockingly comprising more than 2,343 dunums of land, as so-called "State lands". This illegal act constitutes one of the largest land confiscations in the West Bank in recent years, further destroying the contiguity, integrity and viability of our State. We call upon the international community to go beyond condemning and to act to compel the occupying Power to rescind and reverse this dangerous decision. As we approach the monthly Security Council briefing and consultations in this regard, we call upon the Council members to go beyond mere verbal expressions of condemnation of these Israeli decisions and, with urgency and responsibility, to take serious measures to halt once and for all such grave breaches of international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. A firm, unified position against settlements is needed now more than ever in order to resurrect the belief that a two-State solution is still possible.

In this regard, we recall your reaction in which you urged Israel to reverse this illegal decision, describing the decision as "an impediment to the two-State solution". Moreover, the United Nations spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, has correctly stated that "such actions appear to point towards an increase in settlement activities and demonstrate that Israel is continuing to push forward in the consolidation of its control of the West Bank" and that "settlements are illegal under international law, and the Secretary-General urges the Government of Israel to halt and reverse such actions in the interest of a just and comprehensive peace and a just final status agreement".

The Palestinian leadership has repeatedly cautioned that Israel's illegal settlement campaign is undermining and fragmenting the contiguity and territorial integrity of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and physically threatens the viability and prospects for the physical realization of a two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. It should be noted that, over the past nearly five decades of occupation, Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land and natural resources has forcibly displaced thousands of Palestinian civilians and resulted in colonization and de facto annexation of massive areas of Palestinian land, in flagrant breach of the law. The time has come for the international community to act. Enough is enough. No more evidence can be provided to prove that lack of action by the international community has emboldened the occupying Power, along with the settlers it transfers to our land, to act without fear of punishment.

In addition to illegal settlement activities, the occupying Power continues to commit grave violations against the Palestinian people, violating nearly every human right, including the right to life. Palestinian civilians, including children, continue to be killed or seriously injured as the Israeli occupying forces continue to use excessive, indiscriminate force against our defenceless, occupied people. It is clear that without protection for the Palestinian people, more and more Palestinians will be killed while trying to fight for the realization of their freedom and rights. Furthermore, Israel persists with collective punishment measures, such as home demolitions, mass arrests and detentions, along with its illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, imposing policies clearly intended to make the lives of Palestinian civilians as miserable as possible, affecting every man, woman and child.

In this regard, I must highlight the fact that children in particular continue to being placed in Israeli prisons and detention centres and are being subjected to widespread and systematic ill-treatment, including being punished harshly for alleged acts of resistance, including stone throwing. On 16 March 2016, a so-called Israeli court sentenced seven Palestinian children to jail time, ranging from 12 to 39 months, for alleged stone throwing. The children included three 14-year-old boys, two aged 16, one aged 17 and another whose age was not specified. We reject such so-called legislation by Israel that allows for the jailing, for up to 20 years, of Palestinian children for throwing stones, greatly impacting child rights and violating various tenets of international law.

As for the illegal Israeli blockade on Gaza, which continues to affect the entire population of 1.8 million Palestinians, there is no doubt that children, who comprise half of the population, continue to bear the brunt in nearly every respect. Take for example the fact that more than 44,000 children still remain among the over 90,000 people still displaced as a result of Israel's war on Gaza in 2014. Moreover, even as our people in Gaza continue to grapple with the war's aftermath, they are

continuously subjected to further violence by the occupying Power. On 12 March, a Palestinian boy, Yassin Abu Khoussa, age 10, and his sister, Israa Abu Khoussa, age 6, were tragically killed while in their home in Beit Lahiya, in northern Gaza, and their brother, Ayoub Abu Khoussa, age 13, was injured when their home was hit by an Israeli war plane that fired a missile at the area. The occupying Power must be held accountable for these deaths of Palestinian children as well as all the other Palestinian children who have been killed by Israel's war machine.

In this regard, before concluding, I draw attention to some of the most recent crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the period since our last letter to you:

11 March 2016

- In a predawn raid, Israeli occupying forces stormed the headquarters of two media outlets, "Falastin Al-Yawm" (Palestine Today) and TransMedia Production Company, in Al-Bireh, adjacent to Ramallah, confiscating property, detaining two journalists and issuing orders for the offices to be shut down. They also detained the head of Falastin Al-Yawm, Farouq Elayyat, from his home in Birzeit, near Ramallah.

12 March 2016

- Occupying forces launched aerial attacks against Gaza, killing two Palestinian children, Yassin Abu Khoussa (age 10) and his sister, Israa (age 6), and injuring their brother, Ayoub (age 13).
- Israeli naval boats targeted the boats of Palestinian fishermen with missiles, despite the fact that they were sailing within the permitted fishing zone offshore from the north-west of Gaza City.

13 March 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 15 Palestinians in West Bank raids.
- A Palestinian child, Adi Kamal Salameh (age 14), was shot and seriously injured by a live bullet to the chest in the village of Al-Mazraa Al-Gharbiya, north-west of Ramallah.

14 March 2016

- Occupying forces shot and killed three Palestinians: Qassem Jaber (age 31), Ameer Juneidi (age 22) and Yousef Tarayrah (age 18), outside the illegal settlement of "Kiryat Arba", east of Al-Khalil.
- Occupying forces issued demolition notices for two Palestinian-owned buildings in Al-Issawiya, on the outskirts of Occupied East Jerusalem.
- Occupying forces raided the family homes of two Palestinians who had been shot dead by the occupying forces earlier in the day.
- Israeli occupying forces detained overnight 13 Palestinians from the West Bank.

15 March 2016

- Occupying forces broke into the campus of Qaduri University, in Tulkarem, and raided the College of Engineering and other offices, damaging their contents and seizing students' belongings.
- Israeli occupying forces notified Palestinians in Bethlehem district to stop the construction of several residential structures, under the pretext of construction without an Israeli permit.
- Palestinian students suffocated from tear-gas inhalation, while a teacher was injured by a tear-gas canister, when occupying forces fired towards a school in the village of Hosan, west of Bethlehem.
- Nahed Mteir (age 24), succumbed to wounds sustained two weeks earlier during an Israeli raid into the Qalandiya refugee camp.
- Israeli occupying forces demolished four Palestinian-owned stores and the foundations of a building in Beit Hanina, on the outskirts of Occupied East Jerusalem.
- Israeli bulldozers demolished a Palestinian house and an agricultural structure in the locality of Al-Sharafeh and the village of Wadi Rahhal, in Bethlehem.

16 March 2016

- Israel, the occupying Power, rendered a decision for the expropriation of over 2,343 dunums of Palestinian land south of Jericho in the West Bank for the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements.
- The occupying Power issued and renewed administrative detention orders against 43 Palestinian detainees. Nineteen of the detainees received administrative orders for the first time, while the rest received renewed administrative detention orders.
- Israeli occupying forces detained overnight 10 Palestinians from Al-Khalil, Nablus and Salfit.

17 March 2016

- Occupying forces killed two Palestinian youth, Ali Abdulrahman al-Kar (age 19) and Ali Jamal Taqatqeh (age 19), near the illegal settlement of "Ariel", near Salfit.
- Israeli occupying forces detained 15 Palestinians from the West Bank.

19 March 2016

- Israeli occupying forces shot and killed a young Palestinian man, Abdullah al-Ajlouni (identified as being in his 20s), at an Israeli checkpoint near Al-Ibrahimi Mosque.
- At least five Palestinians were detained by occupying forces and a truck was seized from Wadi Burqin and the town of Yaabad, west and south of Jenin.

20 March 2016

- Terrorist Israeli settlers set fire to the home of Ibrahim Dawabsheh, the sole witness to the crime in Duma, which was carried out by terrorist Israeli settlers in July 2015 and killed a mother and a father, Reham and Sa'ad Dawabsheh, and their 18-month-old son, Ali Dawabsheh, and left their 4-year-old son, Ahmed Dawabsheh, an orphan.
- Israeli occupying forces detained a Palestinian in Al-Khalil and summoned four others from Bethlehem for interrogation.

21 March 2016

- The occupying Power punitively demolished the home of Mohammed Ja'abis, the brother of Isra'a Ja'abis, who is currently being held in an Israeli jail. The home was located in the neighbourhood of Jabal al-Mukaber, south-east of Occupied East Jerusalem.
- The occupying Power decided to take over 1,200 dunums of Palestinian-owned land outside the villages of Sawiya, Lubban Esh-Sharqia and Qaryout, south of Nablus.
- Israeli occupying forces raided and wreaked havoc inside the premises of the Husan Village Council, west of Bethlehem, destroying all contents and removing pictures hung on the wall of Palestinians killed by occupying forces.
- A Palestinian was shot and injured by Israeli occupying forces and several others suffocated due to tear-gas inhalation in the village of Beit Rima, near Ramallah.

The Palestinian leadership condemns all of Israel's illegal, inhumane and destructive actions and calls upon the international community, including the Security Council, to demand an end to all illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied State of Palestine, including in East Jerusalem, and including all settlement activities and other violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Left without the protections of international law, Palestinian lives will remain endangered by this illegal occupation and their future ever more uncertain as the situation on the ground further declines and destabilizes. The international community cannot remain silent as the cruelty of the Israeli occupation and subjugation of the Palestinian people continues. Salvaging the prospects for peace and stability and, equally important, salvaging the credibility of international law and the international system itself, require urgent collective action to bring an end to this unjust, unlawful situation. It can no longer suffice to condemn or simply be appalled by Israel's illegal actions and settler terrorism; real international action is needed to bring an end to all such illegal policies and actions. Israel's occupation, which began nearly a half-century ago, in 1967, must come to an end. The Palestinian people yearn for freedom and the realization of their long-overdue inalienable rights and look to the international community to fulfil its duties and obligations to make this a reality.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 578 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 10 March 2016 (A/ES-10/715-

S/2016/236), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations